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SUBJECT: ESF FUNDING CRITICAL TO COMBATING TIP IN TURKEY

REF: ANKARA 3186

¶1. Summary: In FY 2004, we gave the International Office for Migration (IOM) a grant of \$600,000 from ESF to assist with their efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) in Turkey. With that \$600,000 ESF allocation, the IOM has made a world of difference in Turkey's fight against trafficking in persons (TIP). Thanks largely to these efforts, Turkey moved up to Tier 2. However, much remains to be done in this fight, and additional funding is imperative to continue this good work, and further this important USG priority in Turkey. End summary.

What has our \$600,000 bought?

Protection

¶2. Turkey is the number one destination country in the region. The IOM has used one-third of the \$600,000 grant for direct assistance to victims of trafficking (VOTs). According to IOM Strategic Consultant Allan Freedman, the best way to prevent re-trafficking is through direct assistance programs. Without intervention, the rate of re-trafficking of victims is 25 percent; with IOM intervention, the rate plummets to three percent. The IOM has a network of rehabilitation centers in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova already in place.

Prosecution

¶3. IOM organized training of Jandarma and judiciary in high-trafficking areas in Turkey (Istanbul, Antalya and Trabzon) on identification procedures and implementation of the new penal code. IOM has also set up the first pro bono attorneys' list in Turkey under the auspices of the Ankara Bar. Until now, Turkey's answer to TIP has been deportation. A trafficker cannot be prosecuted without a witness, and their victims -- with legal assistance, remaining in-country -- are the best witnesses.

¶4. IOM has worked on international law enforcement cooperation initiatives, which benefit not only the fight against TIP, but also the fight against terrorism. As it turns out many of the law enforcement issues (failure to respond or supply complete information, stovepiping of agencies) are similar.

Prevention

¶5. ESF moneys have funded the implementation of a major international (Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova) public awareness

campaign, including television and print media advertisements of Turkey's "157" victim hotline. The hotline, also started up and run, thanks to ESF money, is staffed 24/7 by Russian, Romanian, Turkish and English-speaking operators, and has netted 50 rescues of VOTs since its May 23 inauguration. Posters and passport inserts advertising the hotline are on display at all regional Turkish consulates and Turkish, Moldovan and Ukrainian ports of entry. (See reftel.)

¶6. IOM is readying a new campaign, including powerful television commercials, to appeal to the Turkish public's importance of family values in response to the 2005 TIP Report call for a continuation and expansion of Turkish public awareness.

New Funding Needed to Continue Project

¶7. According to Freedman, the IOM is out of money for this project. Without additional funding, the direct assistance network will collapse; in turn, VOTs will not be protected. Work on international law enforcement cooperation will cease. There will be little to no hope for effective prosecutions absent witnesses. Due to lack of NGO interest, the 157 hotline tender produced no bidders. Without further funding, IOM will have to pull the plug on 157.

¶8. TIP is an international problem and combating it a Mission Turkey MPP priority. Without international support and partnerships, Turkey would be in a far worse shape on this issue. The impact that the relatively small amount of ESF grant has made is great. Thanks to that contribution, we are seeing progress and meeting benchmarks. TIP is an area where the U.S. is helping save lives with small amounts of money and an example of the uses to which continued ESF could be put.
WILSON